



EPA New England joins the New England states and their local communities in a Clean Beach initiative.

What is EPA's Beach Initiative?

The goal of the Beach Initiative is to protect public health by reducing pollution levels that cause beach closures in New England. This year we revised this goal to include eliminating chronic beach closures. To help meet this goal, we will work closely with existing federal and state water quality programs to focus their efforts in communities experiencing chronic beach closures. We will work with state and local beach managers to develop and execute aggressive plans to remove sources of contamination, and build public support to fund necessary improvements.

Why do we need to reduce pollution at New England's Beaches?

Polluted runoff and untreated sewage can contain bacteria, viruses and protozoa that cause illnesses such as gastroenteritis or hepatitis. Beaches are closed, or advisories posted, when bacteria levels -- which indicate the potential presence of fecal contamination -- exceed acceptable levels. One in four New England freshwater and coastal beaches are closed or posted at least once in a typical year. In the summer of 2006, coastal beaches were cumulatively posted for over 2,000 days at the 800 regularly monitored beaches. Nearly 100 of New England's beaches were closed or had advisories for a total of ten or more days over the last three years.

How are EPA and the New England states accomplishing this goal?

- EPA has awarded coastal New England states over \$7 million to develop and implement beach monitoring, assessment and public notification programs.
- EPA and state officials are providing technical assistance to communities to identify and control sources of fecal contamination from storm water and other pollutant sources.
- We established "Flagship Beaches," which are high-use beaches selected by each state as models for targeted pollution assessments, enhanced monitoring and improving water quality.
- We promote the use of high quality monitoring and assessment methods and support the investigation of new molecular technologies.
- We encourage and involve the public and communities in education, monitoring and advocacy.

What has the Beach Initiative accomplished since 2001:

- The number of coastal beaches with water quality monitoring has almost doubled to over 800 beaches.
- All priority coastal beaches in New England have been assessed and potential pollutant sources mapped.
- State and municipal environmental and health agencies are working with communities with chronic water quality problems to develop an action plan to identify and eliminate sources of pollutants.
- Water quality has improved at several beaches throughout New England due to remediation of pollution sources. Thousands of beach-goers are notified of water quality conditions through various media.

What's Happening at the Flagship and other beaches?

| Flagship Beaches 2007 | | Recent Accomplishments of the Beach Program |
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| CT | - Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme - Ocean Beach Park, New London | Walnut Beach in Milford, a 2005 NRDC "Beach Bum" became a 2006 NRDC "Beach Buddy" based on the town's efforts to improve storm water systems and improve water quality. |
| ME | - Ferry Beach State Park, Saco - Wells Beach, Wells | With the town of Biddeford, the Maine Healthy Beaches Program identified and mapped potential sources of pollution including overboard discharges and combined sewer overflows. Old clay and tile pipes have been replaced with modern materials. |
| MA | - Willows Pier, Salem - Wollaston Beach, Quincy - Ryder Street Beach, Provincetown | The MA DPH completed sanitary surveys at all three flagship beaches. The City of Quincy and MA DCR are funding improvements to sewer lines and catch basins at Wollaston Beach. |
| NH | - Hampton Beach State Park | NH Beach Inspection Program and the <i>Blue Ocean Society</i> "Adopt-a-Beach" volunteers recorded monthly the types of debris and pollution at Hampton Beach. |
| RI | - Goddard Memorial State Park, Warwick - Warren Town Beach - Scarborough State Beach, Narragansett | A pilot study using volunteers from <i>Clean Ocean Access</i> collected samples in the fall of 2006 and winter of 2007 from Newport and Middletown beaches to determine whether surfers were exposed to elevated bacteria levels. |

You can get involved in local beach improvement programs.

- Properly maintain your septic system, pick-up after your dog, do not feed waterfowl.
- Encourage the development and implementation of your community's storm water management program (see www.epa.gov/ne/npdes/stormwater/index.html).
- Learn about water quality at your favorite beach and contact the local health department to ensure water quality is being monitored and problems are investigated.
- Report illicit discharges or connections to local and state officials.
- If you are a boater, use a pump-out facility for your boat sewage.
- Volunteer to monitor the water at your beach (see www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer).

For Beach Water Quality Information:

EPA New England: www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches

CT: www.dph.state.ct.us/brs/ehs/recreation/beaches.htm

MA: www.mass.gov/dph/topics/beaches.htm

RI: www.ribeaches.org

EPA National: www.epa.gov/beaches

ME: www.mainehealthybeaches.org

NH: www.des.state.nh.us/beaches

VT: <http://healthyvermont.gov/enviro/water/recwater.aspx>